contemplate suicide' stating that bumper harvest of tomatoes has put farmers in Karnataka in great distress due to crash in prices;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to take steps to provide relief to them; and

(c) if so, the details?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV):(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) In order to protect the interest of farmers from distress sale of horticultureal commodities which are of perishable nature or have a localised production, are covered under the Market Intervention Scheme (MIS). Under the MIS, on a specific request of the State Government when the prices of any horticultural commodities fall below a certain level and growers are likely to incur losses, the Government intervens in the market and makes purchases of specific quantity at mutually agreed prices on specified time to mop up excess supply of the commodity. This quantity is stored or marketed in different far off markets. The losses, if any, are shared on 50:50 basis, between Centre and concerend State.

No proposal during the year 1998-99 have been received so far from the Govt. of Karnataka for implementation of market Intervention Scheme for tomato in Karnataka to provide relief to the farmers.

Supply of Edible Oil to States

2845. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central Government supply edible oil to States for festival seasons only;

(b) whether State Government have demanded that this oil should be supplied for the whole year;

(c) whether, as a result of Edible Oil Packaging (Regulation) Order, 1998, the prices tend to increase, putting more burden on ration card holders; and

(d) whether Central Government would reimburse the expenditure incurred on packaging by State Governments, particularly by Maharashtra?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV):(a) and (b) Although earlier, the Central Government was supplying edible oils to the States for distribution through the Public Distribution System (PDS) only during the festival season, for the calendar year 1999, it has been decided to supply edible oils for distribution through the PDS, as per the demand of the State Governments throughout the year.

(c) and (d) States like Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat have been supplying edible oils through the Public Distribution System (PDS) in packaged form during 1998. The cost of packaging in poly pouches is borne by the State Governments. This was being done by the States much before the Packaging Order came into force. The edible oils supplied to the State Governments for distribution through the PDS during 1998-99, was, in any case, heavily subsidised (on an average about Rs. 6,600/- per MT). Therefore, further subsidy for packaging, is not under consideration.

Forward Trading in Oil Seeds

2846. SHRI SATISHCHANDRA SITARAM PRADHAN: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Govenrment have allowed forward trading in eight oilseeds, oil and their cakes; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV):(a) Yes Sir.

(b) Notification for the commencement of futures trading in (i) rapeseed/ mustardseed, (ii) groundnut, (iii) sunflower, (iv) ricebran, (v) cottonseed, (vi) coconut, (vii) sesamum and (viii) safflower and their oils and oilcakes has since been issued on 12.4.1999. Trading in these commodities would be undertaken by the recognised Commodity Exchanges who will be required to establish the necessary infrastructure for the purpose. Trading in all these commodities may take about two years to stabilize.

Place for AIDS Patents in City Hospitals

2847. SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is still no place for AIDS patients in the city hospitals; and

(b) the measures proposed to ensure that they are not treated like untouchables?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTERY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI): (a) and (b) All government hospitals have been directed to ensure that the patients including those infected with HIV/AIDS receive proper care without any discrimination. In order to promote a health caring attitude, training is being imparted to doctors and para medical staff in the public and private sectors. Further hospitals have been asked to take steps to follow the prescribed bio-safety measures and other precautions aimed at protecting hospital workers from getting exposed to infection.

Doctor-Population Ratio in the North-East

2848. SHRI ONWARD L. NONGTDU: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the doctor-population ratio in the North-eastern part of India;

(b) the national figures of doctor-population ratio;

(c) whether super speciality health care system is available in the North-East; and

(d) if not, whether Government propose to take immediate steps to make the North-Eastern Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health and Medical Sciences fully functional; if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI DALIT EZHILMALIA): (a) Zone-wise data is not maintained.

(b) The doctor population ratio for allopathic doctors is about 1:2250. Taking into account the number of qualified practitioners in Indian System of Medicine and Homoeopathy, the said ratio would 1 : 950.

(c) The North Eastern Council is supporting the development of Super-specialtiy facilities in the three medical colleges of Assam. The NEC and North Eastern States are also funding the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences, Imphal.

(d) The OPD Clinic with the facility for treatment in the super-speciality of Cardiology and Gastro-entrology commenced at the North Eastern Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health and Medical Sciences, Shillong on 20th August, 1998. For Phase II and III of the project, a concept Plan has been drawn up.